



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney
Eastern District of California

McGregor W. Scott
United States Attorney

501 I Street, Suite 10-100
Sacramento, California 95814

916/554-2700
Fax 916/554-2900

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Contact: Patty Pontello, 916-554-2706
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DEA EXPANDS INTO NORTH STATE

REDDING, CA--Karen Tandy, Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Agency, United States Attorney McGregor Scott, Senator Dianne Feinstein, and Congressman Wally Herger jointly announced today that the DEA's office in Redding will be tripled in size this spring.

In 2002, the DEA established a two-agent post of duty office in Redding. Since then, the DEA has worked closely with state and federal law enforcement officers to build a large number of methamphetamine manufacturing and distribution cases, as well as major marijuana cases. The need to expand the Redding office was recognized by Ms. Tandy at DEA headquarters. Senator Feinstein and Congressman Herger worked to support this expansion. The DEA will soon have an office in Redding composed of six agents (five line agents plus a supervisor). The area to be served by the Redding office includes nine North State counties: Glenn, Tehama, Butte, Plumas, Lassen, Trinity, Shasta, Modoc, and Siskiyou.

The expanded DEA office will continue to work closely with the state Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement, the Cal-Met Program (the state funded anti-meth initiative), as well as county narcotics task forces in the nine county region.

The far northern counties in California have been a major methamphetamine manufacturing and distribution area for years. As just one example, approximately eighteen months ago, several persons were indicted in federal court for their role in a huge meth lab in Trinity County. Follow up investigation determined that the meth produced in that lab was being transported and distributed in Los Angeles, Houston, Atlanta, and Miami. The DEA's expansion of its Redding office is a recognition that more must be done to find and take out these meth rings in the North State.

"Methamphetamine traffickers thought they could take refuge in the rural areas of Redding, but today we counter their threat with more Special Agents, more resources, and more commitment than ever before to ending the plague of meth in our communities," stated DEA Administrator Tandy.

This move also has had the full support of the region's representatives in the Congress.

Senator Dianne Feinstein, who has been very supportive of law enforcement's efforts against methamphetamine, said "The decision by the DEA to increase the number of agents in Redding is an important step forward in the fight against the growing scourge of methamphetamine. I want to personally thank DEA Administrator Karen Tandy. California produces about 80% of the methamphetamine consumed nationwide making it a 'source country' for the drug. It is my hope that by increasing the number of DEA agents in Redding and with the DEA working closely with the U.S. Attorney's Office and other federal, state and local law enforcement officials, we can stem the tide of methamphetamine production and other drug trafficking in Northern California."

Congressman Wally Herger said, "Illicit methamphetamine production and distribution is a growing threat to community safety and economic vitality in the North State, endangering our schools, streets and public lands. The newly expanded DEA presence in Redding will greatly assist our interdiction and eradication efforts, sending a powerful message to drug traffickers -- Not In Our Town!"

The enhanced DEA presence in the North State will also lead to more federal prosecutions of meth manufacturers and traffickers, according to United States Attorney McGregor Scott. "The product that these people are making and selling is poison which is being transported all over our nation. The enhanced DEA resources in the North State will allow us to bring more cases for federal prosecution where we can gain very lengthy and appropriate sentences for those who seek to poison our communities," said Scott.

Local law enforcement officials also hailed the news. "Lab seizures, arrests, firearms, violent confrontations, and contemporary slave labor are all evidence of the meth scourge in the North State," said Shasta County Undersheriff Larry Schaller. "Expanding the DEA office here is a significant step to countering organizational criminal drug trafficking."

Questions may be directed to DEA Special Agent in Charge Javier Pena at (415) 436-7900 or United States Attorney McGregor Scott at (916) 554-2730.